



June 18, 2013

To: Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) is the state's largest general farm organization, representing over 48,000 Michigan farm family members. Our policy is grassroots developed, debated and adopted by our members at the local level.

MFB policy states, "A number of laws now exist for safeguarding the proper care of animals and, if properly enforced, will provide the necessary protection animals need." While we understand the intent of limiting individuals with a prior history of animal abuse from adopting pets, we are concerned that this legislation is not the solution it is purported to be.

There are arguably already other ways for shelters to ascertain an individual's criminal record, prior to following through on a pet adoption. Further, prior offenders who want to have an animal, will find a way to get a pet by going to someone other than a shelter to obtain one.

The scope of this bill is quite broad in whom it might include, and who might have access to the information. We have heard numerous times the connections between those who torture animals and those who commit crimes against humans. This bill includes everyone on the registry, including negligence for violations such as too short of a tether, allowing a dog to ride inappropriately on a vehicle, etc. It would provide information to the general public for animal abuse/neglect that we do not have for abuse or other crimes against humans.

We are concerned about the cost of maintaining a registry, as proposed in this legislation, and the drain on resources to establish it. Additionally, we would oppose the funding of this public database by outside entities.

While we understand the intent is to provide greater knowledge to shelters when offering pets for adoption, it will not prevent an individual from getting an animal. The legislation is broad in its inclusion of crimes against animals, provides access to information broader than we have for crimes against humans, and lacks adequate funding to maintain. Michigan Farm Bureau opposes SB 377 & 378.

Sincerely,

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